

REMARKS

The Examiner's comments from the Office Action mailed November 16, 2007 have been carefully considered. Claims 1-11, 13-16, and 19-23 remain pending in the application and claims 26-43 have been newly added. Editorial revisions have been made to the specification and claims 1, 2, 6, 9-11, 13-15, and 20. Support for these changes can be found throughout the specification and figures. No new matter has been added.

The subject matter of claims 12, 17, and 18 has been incorporated into claims 1 and 14, respectively. Accordingly, claims 12, 17, and 18 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 24 and 25 also have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of claims 24 and 25 in a later-filed continuing application.

Reexamination and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating the allowability of claims 11-13 and 18-20 if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the subject matter of allowable claim 12, which previously depended from claim 1. Accordingly, claim 1 is now allowable over the cited references. Claims 2-11 and 13 depend from claim 1 and are allowable for at least the same reasons. Allowance of claims 1-11 and 13 is respectfully requested.

Applicants have amended claim 14 to include the subject matter of allowable claim 18 and intervening claim 17. Accordingly, claim 14 is now allowable over the cited references. Claims 15, 16, and 19-23 depend from claim 14 and are allowable for at least the same reasons. Allowance of claims 14-16 and 19-23 is respectfully requested.

Allowable claim 11 has been rewritten in independent form including the subject matter of intervening claims 8 and 10 as new claim 26. Accordingly, new claim 26 is allowable over the cited references. Claims 27-34 depend from claim 26 and are allowable for at least the same reasons. Allowance of claims 26-34 is respectfully requested.

Allowable claim 19, which previously depended from claim 14, has been rewritten in independent form as new claim 35. Accordingly, new claim 35 is allowable over the cited references. Claims 36-43 depend from claim 35 and are allowable for at least the same reasons. Allowance of claims 35-43 is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections

Claim 1 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Publication No. 2003/0181098 to Kropp et al. (hereinafter "Kropp"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

As noted above, the allowable subject matter of claim 12 has been incorporated into claim 1. Accordingly, Kropp does not anticipate claim 1, as amended. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claim 1 are respectfully requested. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

Claims 1-7 and 14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by German reference DE 200 12 572 U1 (hereinafter "TKM"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

As noted above, the allowable subject matter of claim 12 has been incorporated into claim 1. Accordingly, TKM does not anticipate claim 1, as amended. Claims 2-7 depend from claim 1 and are allowable for at least the same reasons. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claims 1-7 are respectfully requested.

As noted above, the subject matter of allowable claim 18 and intervening claim 17 has been incorporated into claim 14. Accordingly, TKM does not anticipate claim 14, as amended. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claim 14 are respectfully requested. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

Claims 14, 15, 17, and 21-25 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by European reference EP 0 290 188 A to Dupont (hereinafter "Dupont"). Claims 17, 24, and 25 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, thereby rendering the rejection with respect to these claims moot. With respect to claims 14, 15, and 21-23, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

As noted above, the subject matter of allowable claim 18 and intervening claim 17 has been incorporated into claim 14. Accordingly, Dupont does not anticipate claim 14, as amended. Claims 15 and 21-23 depend from claim 14 and are allowable for at least the same reasons. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claims 14, 15, and 21-23 are respectfully requested. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

Claims 8-10 and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over TKM. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 8-10 depend from claim 1 and are allowable over TKM for at least the same reasons as discussed above with respect to the rejection of claim 1 as anticipated by TKM. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claims 8-10 are respectfully requested. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

Claim 16 depends from claim 14 and is allowable over TKM for at least the same reasons as discussed above with respect to the rejection of claim 14 as anticipated by TKM. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claim 16 are respectfully requested. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P. C
P. O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903
(612) 332-5300

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By Steven C. Bruess

Steven C. Bruess
Reg. No. 34,130
SCB/JKS:rlk

